

Land Acquisition - Statewide Habitat Conservation for Wildlife Diversity

Disclaimer

This project statement is meant to be used as a training aid. While some of the information provided in the project statement is based upon factual data, the entire project statement is not meant to represent an actual project statement drafted by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources.

STATEWIDE HABITAT CONSERVATION FOR WILDLIFE DIVERSITY IN OHIO

Need

There is a need to conserve Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) and their habitats in Ohio. The landscape and wildlife resources of Ohio have changed dramatically since European settlement began. Habitat destruction and unregulated hunting were leading contributors to the decline of wildlife populations and their associated habitats in Ohio. Although many species have been reintroduced and restored to healthy populations, today 131 species are listed as state endangered. Section 4 (A) of the 2015 Ohio State Wildlife Action Plan (2015 SWAP) reveals Ohio's pre-settlement forest habitat has been reduced by 62% (2015 SWAP Section 4 (A) 3). Remaining grassland habitats (2015 SWAP Section 4 (A) 5) occur in tracts that are too small or too fragmented to provide significant management opportunities for dependent species. Approximately 86 percent of Ohio's original wetland acreage has been lost (2015 SWAP Section 4 (A) 7). Only 661,000 acres remain of Ohio's original 5-million wetland acres. Aquatic wildlife in Ohio has been negatively impacted by habitat destruction and degradation. Only 53 percent of monitored stream miles currently meet their aquatic life use designations. As these threats to Ohio's landscape continue, it will be more difficult to prevent further loss of SCGN and their habitats unless large tracts of habitat are conserved and protected.

Purpose

The purpose of this grant is to assist in the conservation of native wildlife with the greatest conservation need in Ohio.

Objective

- Acquire real property interest in 8,000 acres by June 30, 2020. *(NOTE: TRACS strategy - Real Property Acquisition & Management)*

Results and Benefits Expected

- Increase in acres conserved for grasslands, wetlands, forestlands and aquatic environments.
- Fewer species potentially listed as state and/or federally threatened and endangered.
- Potential increase in species population and range expansion.
- Increase in the restoration and reintroduction efforts of species with the greatest conservation need.
- Increased opportunity for the public to participate in wildlife dependent recreation and educational activities consistent with conservation objectives of the grant.

Approach

Objective 1: Acquire real property interest in 8,000 acres by June 30, 2020.

It is the intent of the Division of Wildlife (DOW) to acquire 8,000 acres of SCGN habitat in Ohio using State Wildlife Grant (SWG) funds and the required non-federal match. Each acquisition will support the conservation of native animal SCGN and their associated habitats as designated in the 2015 SWAP. The DOW will obligate funds through a SWG land acquisition grant to enable the DOW to acquire highly desirable tracts of real property as tracts become available on the market. The DOW will use inventory records from previous GAP analysis of existing grasslands, wetlands, forestlands, riparian corridors and other unique habitats in Ohio to identify properties that can best accommodate conservation, restoration and/or reintroduction of species. The DOW will establish focus areas in the state where key acquisitions are highly desirable. As parcels become available within the established focus areas the DOW will initiate acquisition procedures.

Acquisition priority will be given to tracts of land within the established focus areas. Acquisitions will be through fee title or conservation easements. The DOW will follow state acquisition procedures and the federal acquisition procedures described in 49 CFR Part 24 of the UNIFORM RELOCATION ASSISTANCE AND REAL PROPERTY ACQUISITION FOR FEDERAL AND FEDERALLY-ASSISTED PROGRAMS.

The DOW's, Division of Real Estate and Land Management (REALM) will facilitate real property appraisals and review appraisals using USPAP or UASFLA standards as each acquisition dictates. REALM will procure the services of state certified general appraisers who have the established federal credentials. An appraisal will be submitted to the USFWS, WSFR grants specialist for approval prior to closing on properties. REALM will facilitate land surveys, title searches and recording of deeds.

At time of settlement, a Notice of Federal Participation will be recorded on deeds or other legal recording documents. The appraisal, deed, title-vesting certificate, statement of just compensation, and land summary statement will be submitted with annual performance reports after the transaction is completed. The property will be added to the DOW's Land Inventory and managed and monitored as long as it is owned by DOW.

The project leader will perform an Ohio Environmental Assessment Review (OEAR) so that the proper NEPA, SHPO and Section 7 recommendation can be made. Results of the OEAR will be forwarded to the USFWS grant administrator for concurrence.

Grants will be amended when a parcel of land is proposed for acquisition. These amendments will include the need for the purchase (including reference to the SWAP and the species that will benefit), the purposes for which the land will be used and all planned activities, the public benefits to be realized, expected costs for the entire project, and a general management plan. The amendment will include maps identifying property

boundaries and a physical description of the land.

(NOTE: TRACS activity tags for reporting purposes).

TRACS Activity Tag 1: Land Acquisition

TRACS Activity Tag 2 (optional): Fee title

Useful Life

If the acquisition will be via a lease or other temporary ownership agreement, the term of the agreement will be recorded in the amended project.

Geographic Location

Statewide with individual properties being identified during the term of the grant.

Principal Investigator

Not applicable

Program Income

None anticipated

Budget Narrative

Funding for this project shall be provided by the State Wildlife Grants program (5724).

Total project cost is estimated at **\$800,000**

Federal Share shall be **\$520,000** (65%)

State Share shall be **\$280,000** (35%). The State Share shall be provided by non-federal funds from the state wildlife diversity fund.

NOTE: Applicants may provide the budget information using the SF 424A (Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs), SF 424C (Budget Information for Construction Programs), or using the applicant's created budget displaying an equivalent or greater level of detail.

| Budget Category | Cost |
|--|------------------|
| Administrative and Legal Expenses | \$35,000 |
| Land, Structures, ROW, Appraisals | \$740,000 |
| Relocation Expenses | \$0 |
| Architectural and Engineering Fees | \$0 |
| Other Architectural and Engineering Fees | \$0 |
| Project Inspection Fees | \$25,000 |
| Site Work | \$0 |
| Demolition and Removal | \$0 |
| Construction | \$0 |
| Equipment | \$0 |
| Subtotal | \$800,000 |
| Contingencies | \$0 |
| Subtotal | \$800,000 |
| Program Income | \$0 |
| Total | \$800,000 |

Administrative and Legal Expenses - budget estimates for third party fees related to legal fees during the acquisition process.

Land, Structures, ROW, and Appraisals - budget estimates for title opinions, title insurance, appraisals, appraisal reviews, closing costs, surveys, and deed preparation.

Project Inspection Fees - budget estimate for costs associated with site inspection (environmental inspections, etc.) fees prior to closing.

In-Kind Match: No in-kind match will be utilized for this grant.

Pre-Award Costs: \$16,000 for appraisals, surveys, title, and legal costs.

Indirect Cost Statement: We are (1) a U.S. state government entity receiving more than \$35 million in direct Federal funding each year with an indirect cost rate of 19.00%. We submit our indirect cost rate proposals to our cognizant agency. A copy of our most recently approved rate agreement/certification is on file in the WSFR Region 3 Office.

Single Audit Reporting Statement: The state of Ohio was required to submit a Statewide Single Audit report for its most recently closed fiscal year and that report is available on the Federal Audit Clearinghouse Single Audit Database website. The report is filed under the state of Ohio's EIN (99-9999999).

Conflict of Interest Statement: ODW, at the time of this application, is not aware of any actual or potential conflicts of interest that may arise during the life of this award which may affect the ODW, its employees, or its subrecipients. Should an actual or potential conflict of interest arise during the period of performance, then ODW will notify the WSFR Regional Office.

Multipurpose Projects

Not applicable.

Relationship with Other Grants

Not applicable.

Timeline

Period of performance is July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2020.

- July 2017 - September 2017: Focus area boundaries established.
- September 2017 - November 2017: Desirable parcels identified.
- December 2017 - June 2020: Acquire real property parcels within focus areas.

General

NOTE: The State Wildlife Grants NOFO requires that a project statement conducted in the United States contain a description of the activity in sufficient detail so that WSFR staff are able to evaluate compliance with the NEPA, ESA, and NHPA. If information is not provided in the project statement, please attach additional documentation regarding NEPA, ESA, and NHPA.

As individual parcels are identified for acquisition, the compliance process for NEPA, ESA, and NHPA will be required for each individual parcel to be acquired through this project.

Related Pages

Resources

[Project Statement_Land Aquisition for Habitat Conservation](#)

[State Wildlife Grants Apportionment Formula](#)

[WSFR_Quick Reference_SWG](#)

References